

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 PPT-01 SCS-03 /019 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W: BSKIRKPATRICK:ED
APPROVED BY AF:WCHARROP
SCA:CMCCULLOM (PHONE)
L/SCA:RDALTON (INFO)
SCA/SCS:EPOWERS (INFO)
PPT/F:FRANDO (INFO)
AF/EP:RHOLLIDAY (INFO)

-----092971 190303Z /66

P 182355Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY COTONOU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 197266

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:CASC, PDIP, DM

SUBJECT: TRAVEL ADVISORY: DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN AMBASSADOR
BOYA AND ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARROP

1. AMBASSADOR BOYA MET WITH ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY
HARROP ON AUGUST 17 TO DISCUSS THE ARREST CASES OF SICK
AND MANSON. HARROP EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN OVER THE
CONTINUED ARRESTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN BENIN. HE
RECALLED AMBASSADOR BOYA'S EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH
AMBASSADOR SEELYE ON THE DETENTION OF U.S. CITIZEN THOMAS
NAKADA FOR SOME 31 DAYS. HARROP NOTED THAT SICK AND
MANSON HAD BEEN HELD WITHOUT CHARGE FROM AUGUST 2 - 15.
HE UNDERSTOOD THE DELAY IN THEIR RELEASE WAS THE NECESSITY
FOR HIGH LEVEL CLEARANCE AT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.
HARROP EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THIS PROCEDURAL PROBLEM
COULD BE RESOLVED BECAUSE AMERICAN TOURISTS COULD NOT
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UNDERSTAND WHY THEY SHOULD BE HELD SO LONG WITHOUT CHARGE.

2. HARROP STATED THAT WE HAD CONCLUDED THE SITUATION IN
BENIN WAS SUFFICIENTLY UNCERTAIN THAT WE HAD DECIDED TO
ISSUE A PUBLIC WARNING TO AMERICANS NOT TO VISIT THAT
COUNTRY. THIS NOTICE WOULD BE CIRCULATED TO ALL EMBASSIES,
CONSULATES AND U.S. PASSPORT ISSUING OFFICES. HARROP

STATED THAT WE HESITATED TO DO THIS BUT THAT WE ARE

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WELFARE OF OUR CITIZENS. HARROP STATED THAT HE HOPED WE COULD WITHDRAW THIS WARNING IF THE BENINESE GOVERNMENT COULD ASSURE US THAT U.S. CITIZENS WOULD NOT BE DETAINED. HE NOTED THAT THIS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS AN UNFRIENDLY ACT BUT ONLY AS ACTION TO PROTECT THE WELFARE OF OUR CITIZENS.

3. BOYA REPLIED THAT A PUBLIC NOTICE WARNING U.S. CITIZENS NOT TO TRAVEL TO BENIN WOULD BE REGARDED AS UNFRIENDLY IF THE GPRB WAS NOT INFORMED IN ADVANCE. HE SAID THAT WE SHOULD SEND A MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENIN INFORMING THEM OF OUR INTENTIONS AND THE REASONS THEREFORE.

4. HARROP NOTED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WITH AMBASSADOR SEELYE FOLLOWING THE NAKADA CASE HAD BEEN A WARNING, BUT THE ARRESTS HAD CONTINUED. WE HAD PREVIOUSLY INFORMED OUR EMBASSIES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO WARN AMERICANS NOT TO TRAVEL TO BENIN BUT AMERICAN TOURISTS WERE STILL ARRIVING IN BENIN.

4. BOYA STATED THAT HE FEARED THE EFFECT ON PUBLIC OPINION IN THE U.S. OF A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD INFORM HIS GOVERNMENT. IF HIS GOVERNMENT DID
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NOT RESPOND, EITHER THROUGH HIM OR OUR EMBASSY IN COTONOU, WE COULD TAKE THE CONTEMPLATED ACTION.

5. HARROP STATED THAT THE COURSE OF ACTION SUGGESTED BY AMBASSADOR BOYA WAS PREFERABLE. IT WAS AGREED THAT WE WOULD NOT ISSUE A TRAVEL ADVISORY ON BENIN PENDING A RESPONSE FROM THE GPRB.

6. FOR COTONOU: IF THERE IS NO GPRB REACTION BY NEXT WEEK POST WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH GPRB TO DISCUSS ACTIONS WE PROPOSE NOTING THAT WE HAVE ALREADY INFORMED BENINESE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON.

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Sent Date: 18-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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